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With the Seasons

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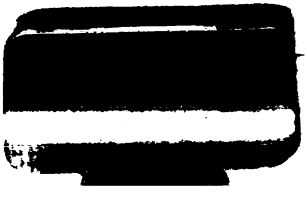

Prof. H. Morse Stephens

Greetings from

South Mountain Park

Binghamton

December 3d. 1877.

WITH THE SEASONS

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

WITH
THE SEASONS

BY

MARY AUGUSTA MASON

NEW YORK
A. D. F. RANDOLPH COMPANY
1897

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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

Press of
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New York

TO

BESSIE VIRGINIA DICKINSON,

MY DEAR COMPANION LOVER OF THE WOOD AND FIELD, THIS LITTLE BOOK IS TENDERLY INSCRIBED

514870

One comes with violets in her hands,
And one with roses all a-blow,
With golden sheaves another stands,
The last brings as her gift—the snow.

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FLORENCE IN SPRINGTIME

WHO would not Galileo be
In springtime, when the almond tree
Is fluttering its pink snowflakes down,
Inviting banishment from town?
I'd gladly seize my globe and chart
And for those hills of Florence start,
Did any Inquisition see
That banishment were best for me!
The Medici, asleep below,
Would not be more at home, I know.
No "star tower" would confine me there;
Out in the soft Italian air
I should discover at my feet
Small worlds that make the large one sweet;
Through glowing fields I'd lead the bees
In search of fragrant Pleiades;

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Each stone would testify anew
Of lambs the little Giotto drew;
Each path would lead to some calm height
That keeps the Arno still in sight.
And if, forgetting it was day,
The nightingale should start his lay,
And mocking-bird sing east and west
To lead me further from his nest,—
Among those hills where magic Spring
Experiments with leaf and wing,
Where dews from bluest skies fall free
On freshly opened worlds for me,—
Who would not Galileo be!

AM I READY

M I ready, am I ready for the Spring?
Who have no buds to bloom, no songs to sing,
No answer, should I hear a silvery call,
But just a great warm loving for it all.

How fresh the picture in the hill-set frame;
Untravelworn the songsters when they came;
The south winds kind as though they had not blown
With blasting fury from a frozen zone.

How quickly are the winters all forgot
At sight of one small, shy forget-me-not!
How many springs that bird on yonder tree
Can sing back to the hearts of you and me!

I wonder if the robin knows how sweet
That little tuft of violets at his feet,
Or if those winsome blossoms are aware
Of all that rapture borne upon the air.

Such alchemy in spring's prismatic rain,
That all the fields are young and glad again;
Each flower its old-time pattern loves to use,
The bee no longer hunts, but has to choose.

Dear bluebird sky and song-enchanted air!
Dear minstrel brooks that wander everywhere!
Dear earth to keep such sweet things in your heart
And never let a bud too early start!

Dear every sight and every sound I hear,
That makes the earth so glad a place each year;
One's soul goes out in eager questioning,
O am I ready, ready for the Spring?

THE LAST SNOWFALL

HERE'S been a snowfall of forget-me-nots,
For yonder hills are white this morn I see;
It drifted down last night mysteriously,
And melted everywhere save in these spots.
The fleecy clouds looked conscious of such plots,
And when the south winds came along so free
And shook the buds awake upon the tree,
And in a frolic whisked across the lots,
We straightway were prepared to see new sights
And hear new sounds when morn broke on our ken;
For who can but accept when Spring invites?
Ah, surely not the bluebird and the wren;
The air is filled with twitters and soft flights,
And, lo, the dew is on the grass again!

HAD I WINGS

ERE it springtime and had I the choosing
Of wings to go whither I would,
Not a moment of time I'd be losing
In making my choice understood.

I love them all—phœbe and bluebird,
Song-sparrow and robin red-breast ;
But there's one golden-belted wee fellow
I envy above all the rest.

He does little wooing in public,
He spends little time in the tree ;
But he finds the first bank of arbutus,
So I'll beg for the wings of the bee.

'TIS APRIL

HERE'S a thrush in the thicket, 'tis April I know—
There are signs of her presence wherever I go;
There's gold on the willows and blue in the sky,
And pink where the snowdrifts of arbutus lie;
There's red on the maples and color to spare—
Each bud is awake and awaiting its share.
The butterflies know it is time for their wings,
Through the mists there are hints of invisible things,
And on through the meadows and over the hill
Sweet April is calling her followers still;
Her footprints are violets, her breath is the air,
And her speech is the singing of birds everywhere.

IN SPRINGTIME

THE air is blue with the bluebird wings,
And sweet with the bluebird calls,
The trees are the bluebird palaces,
And the earth their vernal halls.

An incense hangs over shrub and tree,
And the blue eyes in the grass
Look up in violet surprise
To see the white clouds pass.

The golden disks of the dandelions
Send out their flower rays,
And the daffodils, with their dainty frills,
Spring up in the garden ways.

The clannish innocence blooms white
  Upon the peaceful hills;
A butterfly has found its wings
  And flutters where it wills.

And the brook that ceased last year to flow,
  And never a word has said,
Once more starts out on its stony way,
  By sweet remembrance led.

And something rare, with a red, red breast,
  Is building a nest outside,
And I hear a song that I heard last year,
  Ere the flowers drooped and died—

A song that only a bird can sing,
  A song of a robin, too,
A song of hope, a song of Spring,
  A song he has kept for you.

AN EMPTY NEST

HEN Spring comes to seek her own
Do they all rise at her words?
Is the little fledgeling's tone
Sweet as was the parent bird's?
When once more the streamlets roam
Do the robins all come home?

Here's a nest upon a bough,
But there comes no bird to claim;
Has she made a new nest now?
If from some far land we came
We should all the home nest know,
Even were it filled with snow.

There are blue eyes that we miss
In the flush of violet time;
In a world so sweet as this
Still are bells that do not chime;
In the heart are many spots
Sacred to forget-me-nots.

WHEN FRESH BUDS ARE UPON THE BOUGHS

OF all the days I love most these,
When fresh buds are upon the boughs,
When happy builders haunt the trees
And earth is tuneful with their vows.

Deep in the woods my way I take
To see how some shy woodlings fare,
Though all the gladdening meadows make
Sweet overtures to keep me there.

Titania's fairy following
Finds shadow here but never gloom;
The last brown leaf takes gladly wing
To give the new year's children room.

Here lichen goblets lift for dew,
And ferns uncurl and petals ope,
And where a bit of sky peeps through
The blue hepatica takes hope.

The bugler thrush, at sunset's flood,
His silvery changes over rings,
And to this crown of greening wood
Is faithful as returning springs.

Here speech is bloom and speech is song;
And when Diana's bow is bent
In evening skies, a merry throng
Holds fête within the leafy tent.

The stars and moon look through the trees
But learn no secrets of the wood—
The birds and fairies hold the keys
And keep their tryst with Robin Hood.

A NEW EARTH

OME mystic hand unlocks the icy gates;
Once more through happy fields the blue veins run,
While with expectant hearts come one by one
The robins to make ready for their mates;
A momentary hush, as Spring awaits
A further signal from the watchful sun,
And from the old a new earth is begun.
A memory in each flower again creates
A likeness of itself. The same sweet thrill
Stirs in each bird-breast the desire to sing;
And heaven once more the cup of earth to fill
Bends lightly over with unwearied wing;
In shining companies by rock and rill
Rise up the lovely followers of the Spring.

APRIL'S LADY

N her blue eyes' misty depths
Saw I something more than she
Would allow, and cloudy lids
Shut the blue skies then from me.

But a warm desire to look
Into longing eyes upturned,
Parts the clouds, and there I see
That for which my soul has yearned.

Forth with hesitating step
Comes this gentle lady fair,—
All the world her lover is,
Yet to claim her none would dare.

Smiles she on them all alike,
Giveth each to her his best;
Happy lady! happy world!
Love returned with interest.

This is she, the Spring's first love,
With the tender flower face,
Coming out of troubled skies,
Coming to a troubled place,—

With the violets in her eyes,
The arbutus on her breast;
First of all thy lovely train,
April's lady, thou art best!

SINCE LAST I HEARD HIS SONG

HERE has he been since last I heard his song,
The long and dreary winter months between?
A month of bird-life many years must mean,
So sweet each hour on light wings borne along.
Now, standing forth from all the happy throng
That rise from earth and from the heavens lean,
My red-breast of past years again is seen;
And in and out between the rafters strong
Short flights of wing the busy builder takes,
Did some one learn to love him as I do,
In those long absences the winter makes?
And does she keep for him her young heart true
Until the Spring for her again awakes?—
Then lover of my bird, love I thee too!

MAY

HEAD full, a heart full, a soul full
of May!
Can one have too much of it?
Never, I say.
To think of its being around the whole sphere,
And still enough left for a sample next year.

One longs to have wings to keep up with the
train
That flushes the mountain and dapples the
plain;
In primrose-laned England, where twilights
are long
And the nightingale holds his sweet sessions
of song;
In Dante's land, too, by that old Southern sea
Where Spring first was conscious how fair she
could be;

And on to Japan, where the spiced breezes
lift
The cherry-tree blooms in a frolicsome drift.
Anywhere, everywhere, out 'neath the blue,
We may in a vision see all things made new;
Where'er fancy leads us the charm is the same,
And the East and the West might be called
by one name.

DANDELION CURRENCY

WHAT care I for paper or silver,
When I can have plenty of gold,
And draw from each bank in the springtime
More wealth than my coffers can hold!

All ye who have taste for the meadows,
Why stay in the turbulent towns?
Here are riches and comfort in plenty—
A mint overflowing with crowns!

They are current the selfish world over,
And none need be poor any more;
I'm so rich that I leave the gold blossoms
To tarnish and fade at my door.

Earth is ready for all her partakers,
Each cell with its honey is filled;
Here are the gold streets, and the mansions
Are waiting for some one to build.

A FLOWER WITH A SOUL

VERY springtime forth I go
Searching for this spirit-flower;
For who knows but it may grow,
After some inviting shower,
With the blossoms by the stream,
Just to see how earth would seem?

No one yet has ever found
Such a flower, I am told;
But if thus the frozen ground
Lives of violets can hold
And the frail anemones,—
It might harbor one of these.

Will it blossom white or blue?
Will it meek and modest grow?
Or, with perfume that is new,
Like a stately lily blow?
Will it bear some sacred name
Of the land from whence it came?

Loving quiet ways the best,
  Answering some plaintive word,
It may grow beside the nest
  Of a shy, brown mother-bird,—
And the little birds below
Be the only ones to know.

LOVE CALL OF THE CHICKADEE

F I had two wings and a song and feather
I should certainly fly away
To him, when he calls in the soft spring weather
His sweet "Come play!" "Come play!"

Just as soon as the brook goes rushing
Down the glen like a restless fay,
Out from his heart the song comes gushing
To all "This way!" "This way!"

He knows quite well when the buds are swelling,
And when the robin has come to stay,
And all good news he is first in telling
With his "To-day!" "To-day!"

He gave a hint of the glad times coming
While yet the snows on the hillside lay ;
Now birds go wooing and bees go humming,
He sings, "In May!" "In May!"

SING, MY LADY, SING

ING, my lady, sing!
Life is sweet in spring—
Wooing's in the very air,
Love for all and some to spare,
Sing, my lady, sing!

Sing, my lady, sing!
Love is on the wing;
He will pause a moment here
In the first flush of the year,
Sing, my lady, sing!

Sing, my lady, sing!
Time will trouble bring;
Love is young and constant now,
He will keep awhile his vow,
Sing, my lady, sing!

Sing, my lady, sing!
Youth is everything—
  Love and hope and joy and song;
  Sing, for youth will not stay long,
Sing, my lady, sing!

TO THE WINDS OF JUNE

LOW gently, Winds of June! Each downy nest
Is full of unsung songs and unspread wings
That will respond to patient hoverings;
Soft rockings suit the rustic cradles best.

Blow gently, Winds of June! The bud is here
That soon will be transformed into the rose,
The sweetest miracle that nature knows;
A breath might mar the beauty of the year.

So easily the song drops out of tune,
So eagerly the sun absorbs the dews,
So quickly does the rose its petals lose,
That, for their sakes, blow gently, Winds of June!

HIGH-TIDE

HE high-tide of the year has come at last;
From their mysterious deeps the waves of white
And pink and green are breaking on our sight;
The airy cloud-ships slowly sailing past,
Light shadows on the shimmering orchards cast;
With fragrant overtures the trees invite
Robin and oriole to stay their flight—
Amid the leaves their homes to anchor fast.

Then comes the full, delicious rise and fall
Of night and morn; and dreamy twilights fill
The soul like sweet responses to a call;
Where once were roses there are roses still;
The earth must pattern after her old ways
As long as there are Junes and summer days.

THE HONEY-MOON

HEN the clover's in its prime,
Then's the sweetest marriage-time.
They the longest honey-moon
Have who marry now in June,
When the earth's been wooed and won,
And the summer's just begun ;
When the daylight loves to stay,
And steals half the night away ;
And the moonbeams shine so deep
That there seems no time for sleep ;
When the air throbs with the gush
Of the silver-throated thrush,
And the soil has felt the thrill
And bursts into bloom at will,
Imitating every shade
That the skies have ever made ;
When the perfume, songs and light,
Earth's fulfillment of her plight,

Steal into the human heart,
Making all the love-chords start
Into harmonies so sweet
That there seemeth no retreat
But to sing and blossom, too,
Just as birds and flowers do.

THE LOVE OF NATURE

OW generous Nature is to those who show
A sympathy with her! How every breeze
Seems a caress! How all the shrubs and trees
Put on their tenderest green, and flowers blow,
And even birds and insects seem to know
Your heart and strive, each in its way, to please!
The birds build at your door, the honey-bees
Are sure of finding sweets where'er you go—
Since every rose will blossom at its best
For those who have the rose's love within.
The heart that blesses others will be blest;
The lives that look for blossoms, blossoms win;
The love of birds will build a song-bird's nest
Upon a bough where winter snows have been.

LADY JUNE

ADY of the sky and sea,
Lady of the wood and lea—
Lady June.

See her springing from the grass!
See her smiling from the sky!
Watch her back and forward pass
As the little winds go by!
Hear her singing in the wood!—
'Tis a lady—not a thrush;
Who else with such sweetness could
Crown a prickly rose's bush?

It is Lady June, my dear;
All the little birds we hear
Sing her praises, Lady June;—
Careful where each foot is set,
It can *feel*, the mignonette,
And take flight, the Lady June.

THE SCARLET TANAGER

FLAME went flitting through the
wood;
The neighboring birds all under-
stood
Here was a marvel of their kind;
And silent was each feathered throat
To catch the brilliant stranger's note,
And folded every songster's wing
To hide its sober coloring.
Against the tender green outlined,
He bore himself with splendid ease,
As though alone among the trees.
The glory passed from bough to bough—
The maple was in blossom now,
And then the oak, remembering
The crimson hint it gave in spring,
And every tree its branches swayed
And offered its inviting shade;

Where'er a bough detained him long,
A slender, silver thread of song
Was lightly, merrily unspun.
From early morn till day was done
The vision flitted to and fro.
At last the wood was all alone;
But, ere the restless flame had flown,
He left a secret with each bough,
And in the Fall, where one is now,
A thousand tanagers will glow.

IN SUMMER

HAT can one do in summer when the world
Has all her banners of delight unfurled,
When pleasure beckons us a thousand ways,
Or folds her wings and close beside us stays?
Afar and near is something rare and sweet;
Upon the grass the print of Beauty's feet;
At every turn a picture; some glad notes
Sung first for us from newly conscious throats;
A glory in the sunshine; by the streams
Soft cadences invite and blend with dreams;
Out in the fields the honey-hunters go;
Over the heights the merry breezes blow;
Up in the sky some mystic signs are set—
The earth has never failed to read them yet;
And as the year rejoices in her prime,
The happiest thing to do in summertime
Is on some mossy bank content to lie
And watch the changes in the earth and sky.

COBWEBS

WONDER if you
Can tell me who
Stole down last night through the dark and dew,
And wove such queer
Little patterns here,
And fastened them firm to each grassy spear.

And here and there
On the fences bare,
These filmy laces are wrought with care ;
Strung with diamond dew
Every morning new,
They sparkle and gleam as the sun looks through.

Is each silken net
For some fairy set,
Who stayed too late at the moonlight fête ?

And caught within
For his elfin sin,
Must he weave each delicate web again?

Could we see aright,
Every moonlight night
Are the fairy looms and hands in sight;
When the East is rose,
Every fairy knows
That his task is done and he homeward goes.

TO DEPARTED JUNE

NOT hours enough in all those pleasant days
To give expression to the joy you felt;
Like some rare spirit in our world you dwelt,
Then like a spirit sought some happier ways.

A few fair roses, lying on your breast,
Still bloom in sweet remembrance of that time
When roses and the year were in their prime;
And still the sun sinks late into the West.

The summer lilies, too, are now in bloom,
But they are pale and bowed with secret woe
For some glad time they came too late to know;
Thus even in the sunshine there is gloom.

The birds have flown their nests, they quickly learn
To soar, and yet I doubt if flying brings
The peace they felt beneath their mother's wings;
You would not know your own should you return.

The hills fade in a quiet mist away,—
Who knows but you, dear June, still linger there
In answer to some faithful lover's prayer,
And seem through pity half inclined to stay.

The moon has made her weary round once more,
And sends weird shadows through the woods to learn
If you are hiding there, but leaf and fern
Breathe only of a blessing gone before.

The river takes a slower, calmer pace,
The brook has lost its happy, buoyant bound,

Less sweetness seems to thrill through every
sound,
And some rare light is missed from every place.

Without are all things changed, within the soul
Are changes, too, that have been wrought by
June;
We've listened to a strain of perfect tune,
And now our spirits long to hear the whole!

RED CLOVER

OU are the pride of the meadow, red clover!
Where you are blooming there surely old Rover
Knows the slow kine always wait to be driven;
This morning they meekly passed out through the gate,
This evening both they and old Rover are late—
Red clover, just see all the trouble you've given!

Was it some friend you were harboring under
Your clustering leaves, that just trebled its wonder
To see you fold up your green leaves without warning,

And bow your sweet blossom-face down
out of sight,
Lest the dew catch the red from your
cheeks in the night,
And the sun be displeased when he comes
in the morning?

The honey bees say you are close with your
honey;
They can't get a drop, and what seems very
funny
The bumblebee, with his long nose, can get
plenty;
So he bumbles around, like a great clumsy
elf,
All the red clover honey he has to himself,—
Just now, buzzing by with his load of sweets
went he.

But here come the cows and old Rover!—be-
hind him
The boy who was sent to the pasture to find
him.

Good-night to the pasture, and to you, red clover;
'Tis time for us all to be wandering home,
The time of the twilight and starlight has come,
And the time for the bees to get honey is over.

REPOSE

HE clouds have thrown long golden anchors out
To reach the fastnesses among the hills
That purple rise and hem the blue sea in;
Upon its azure tablets has the sun
Writ his last message. Birds forget their quest,
And hearts their trouble; flowers cease to fade;
Fear has been lost and the keen sense of hope
Been dulled a little through what promises
To be the eve of a fulfillment sweet;
Sleep draws the curtains of that other land,
Then works a charm to blind the vision there;
While, like a ghost of the departed sun,
The moon steals spirit-like upon the world,
And just as silently the azure sea
To silver turns, and the tired earth forgets
It ever was, or it must be again.

O SWEET, SWEET WORLD

sweet, sweet world, were I a bee,
And such delights were offered me,
From morn till eve I'd spread my wings
And hover o'er the fragrant things,
And never miss a single bloom,
But carry homeward in the gloom
My load of sweets and hoard it so
My golden cells would overflow!

Each cup should bear a magic name
To tell me whence the honey came!
"Arbutus," "clover," "violet,"
"Azalea," "pink," and "mignonette"—
And other flowers we love to see
And that are sweet to man and bee;
When winter comes at home I then
Would live the summer o'er again.

THE RAIN-DOVE

HEN the clouds have gathered deep
O'er the languid summer sky,
And the breeze has gone to sleep,
To be wakened by and by;
From the wood I hear the call
Of the rain-dove, as from some
Spirit that has lost its all
And with grief is overcome.

And the weird, unbirdlike notes,
Heard at lonely times and long,
Seem to still the other throats
That have throbbed with happy song;—
Never call to brooding mate,
Silent all the wood as though
Bluebird, thrush, and robin's fate
Hung upon the rain-dove's woe.

But the kindly clouds at last
  Break the tension of the hush,
Through the drops now falling fast
  Comes the music of the thrush;
And the bluebird's heard again
  Singing at his sweetheart's door,
And the robin's joyful strain,
  For the rain-dove mourns no more.

THE PASSING OF SUMMER

HE Summer leads her children on ;
The violet has dropped behind,
But still the way with bloom is lined ;
A chill, mysterious flower at dawn
Gleams white a moment on the lawn.

The Summer leads her children on ;
The little household on yon bough
Has lived and loved and gone, and now
I see a leaf about the nest
Shine red like evening in the West.

The Summer leads her children on,
And other sunny vales make room ;
The little bud that did not bloom,
The little bird that did not sing,
Will never miss its flower or wing.

SEPTEMBER TWILIGHT

HE sun has set his golden seal
Upon the world he left behind,
But up the eastern mountains steal
The shadows he forgot to bind.

The little birds fly to their homes;
The flowers forget the hues they wore;
A loitering cricket forward comes
And chants his mournful measure o'er.

A murmur where the river ran;
A whispering among the leaves
Of some misfortune to their clan
And a mistrust of autumn eves.

A sudden sense of secret things,
Of something brooding in the air;
A slow withdrawing—as of wings—
Some guardian angel called elsewhere!

MOONLIGHT IN THE AUTUMN WOOD

IT seems as if some spirit that I knew
Called me by name, and gently led me where
The still winds sleep and blessed moonbeams are;
The trees have lost their gaudy noonday hue,
And stand like spirit trees all bathed in dew
Of moonlit heaven; while soft above me there
A bird calls in its dreams, as though aware
Of some sweet spell the night around it threw.

The perfume that some hidden flower sets free,
The shadowy pictures in the path before,
The falling of a nut from yonder tree,
The rustling of strange things I cannot see,
Make me forget the face that daylight wore,
And love the tender moonlight fancies more.

WINGS AND FLIGHTS

HAT rare estates, what goodly store
Of garnered sheaves the summer bore,
By courtesy preside we o'er!
What woodland beds of unnamed flowers,
What gold, that mines itself, is ours!
To tempt the soul, what depths of blue
That let such tender shinings through!

What days for airy voyaging!
Now every leaf would be a wing,
Would follow—though it may not sing—
To some fair land where Summer goes
To cherish her immortal rose
And keep her singing birds in tune
Until she hears the summons—June!

IN OCTOBER

WONDER will they find it sweet as we
Shall Paradise?—these shy young birds that now
For the first time have put to test their wings,
And flown beyond the silent nesting-tree,
Beyond the skies that sheltered them in June,
To a far land which they have never seen?

What faith, what matchless wisdom they have shown!
How could they know that Winter follows close
Upon such radiant days and nights as these?
In what sweet dream was it revealed to them
That they by simply trusting to their wings
Might follow the dear Summer on her way?

The beckoning branches now sway back and
forth
In vain to tempt the restless wings to stay;
The falling leaves pave all the earth with
gold,
But they are not deceived—these Summer
friends;
Their hearts have grown so strong with con-
fidence
Born of some inward sight we cannot know,
That all the gracious overtures of earth
At this rare season cannot stay their flight.
By day I see the wings, by night I hear
Soft twitters in the air, and know they still
Are on their way; my bluebird that I loved
And that I saw grow full of life and song
In this forsaken tree before my door,
My robin with the newly painted breast—
They, too, have joined the winged caravan,
And think no more of me.

AN AUTUMN MORNING

HE dark dream curtains of the night have silently been drawn,
And out upon our vision steps the lady of the dawn,
Once more she outlines through the gloom where hills and valleys are—
While rosy lights steal up the sky and pale each lingering star.

Already shine the signal fires upon each mountain crest,
Already some new sense is stirred within each waking breast;
The sunrise miracle is wrought, yet is it quite the same
World that lay but yesterday beneath his golden flame?

Some other light than sunshine has touched
each shrub and tree,
Was it a dream they had of heaven or of a
heaven to be?

The earth is all aglow with fires that burn but
not consume,
In one long, fragrant breath the flowers
breathe out their last perfume;
The shy young birds that have not flown sing
soft their first love tune—
I doubt if it will be more sweet when they
come back in June.
The cricket sentinels tick out the hour with
noisy wing,
Comes forth to greet the morn with praise
each happy, trustful thing.
It is the sunset of the year that knows no east
or west,
O hillsides warm and tender! O valleys
color-blest!

AFTER THE BALL

HE frost has turned low all the lights on the lawn,
The halls are deserted by dryad and faun;
The orchestra's ceased and the singers have flown,
A cricket tunes forth a brave note all alone;
The trees are dismantled, their hangings laid low
Where the feet of the dancers tripped light to and fro;
Cinderella was here, for her slipper I find,
But the coach that she came in is wrecked by the wind;
And here is the pipe that was played on by Pan,
Yet no one can tell where the shy fellow ran;
A shawl of fine cobweb a spider has spun
Still hangs in the loom where the weaving was done;

A butterfly fan and a jewel of dew
Were dropped by a guest when the banquet
was through;
The perfume of some lovely blossom now
dead
Is over the scene like a memory shed,
And only the blue arch remains over all
As fair as it was on the eve of the ball.

A NOVEMBER EVENING

HE last bird wings across the sky,
The sunset clouds in crimson die,
The daisy bows her saintly head,
The skies drop incense o'er the dead,
The moon comes forth with light constrained;
As low the breeze a requiem sings,
The sculptor Frost his chisel brings
And shapes the dewdrops into stones—
White monuments to mark the thrones
Where late the gentle flowers reigned.

A BELATED BLOSSOM

FAIR, sweet blossom, latest of its kind
To bloom, unfolded in the autumn air,
And laid its timid bud and being bare;
Then shed a dewdrop tear, as if it pined
For its companions the unfeeling wind
Had blighted and left shivering, scentless there.
Thus naught but desolation was its share,
For autumn is not June, even flowers find.

Alas for souls and flowers that bloom too late
And find but ruins of a tenderer time!
To live with others were a happier fate;
To die with summer were a death sublime.
O Autumn, just one summer day give back,
That this frail thing may die and feel no lack!

A PURSUIT

CAUGHT the sound of tripping feet,
And followed after, down the street;
The tantalizing footfalls drew
Me on and on, till naught I knew
But that I must make good the chase,
And turn about that fleeing face.
The leaves dropped slowly as I passed;
I felt a sudden icy blast,
And heard the footfalls, then, no more.
The way she went soon drifted o'er;
And what to show that she was here,
Except these oak leaves brown and sere
And yonder empty nest,—and these
Are dead, and secret as the breeze,
And only silent witness bear,—
While she was all alive and fair?

THE SEASON OF SILENCE

OW comes the hush that follows after song ;
In one wild burst the melody went out
From all the glowing woods and fields about,
And coldly shines the sun the whole day long.

The South wind doth inspire the earth no more ;
The glad, responsive voices now are dumb ;
And if, as guest, a summer day should come,
No smiling band would open wide the door.

What matter if the sun shines or the moon ?
What matter if the dewdrops turn to snow ?
The robin and the bluebird will not know,
And the arbutus never wakes too soon.

A COMPARISON

NOWFLAKES, snowflakes, what are you
When compared with drops of dew!
Never once did you repose
In the heart of a June rose;
Never found a place of rest
In a robin's new-made nest,
Nor held sunbeams in your breast;
Never drawn at midnight hour
By the perfume of some flower;
Never in a lichen cup
Graced the board where fairies sup;
Nor on cobweb hung a gem,
Nor refreshed a bruiséd stem;
Never in response to prayer
Did you drift adown the air,
Blessing blossom, bud and spear
With a sympathetic tear.
Snowflakes, snowflakes, what are you
When compared with drops of dew!

WINTER

IF earth had always silent been as now,
We should not know how sweet the robin's strain,
Nor feel a lack till songs come back again.
Or if the white earth and the leafless bough
Had felt no other covering than the snow,
We should not sigh and of the chill complain,
Nor watch for the sweet springtime and the rain
To break the barren, wintry wait below.
If we had always known long nights like these,
We should not be impatient for the morn;
Or had the fragrant rose less power to please,
We never should have found and felt its thorn.
Ah, if the soul had known no other sphere,
It would not mourn and be so restless here.

IN THE MORNING

HERE were dainty footprints here and there,
Dropped in the snow last night;
Were the fairies won from their mystic home
By the charm of the pale moonlight?

No step was seen when the grass was green,
But the soft and yielding snow
Has taken the print of the fairies' feet,
And tells where the fairies go.

There are fairies in feathers and fairies in furs,
Some leap like earthly things,
And others walk like a stately bird,
Whose step has a hint of wings.

Are they doomed to dwell in the trees by day?
Does the moonlight set them free?
Do they tell through the creaking oak and pine
Of the sorrow we cannot see?

Or are they the merriest elfin folk
That ever went forth in the night,
Wooing and waltzing through woodland ways
And tracing the meadows white?

No step was seen when the grass was green,
But the kind and yielding snow
Takes every print of the fairies' feet,
And tells where the fairies go.

THE PATIENT SEASONS

OW patiently the seasons bide their time!
No murmur from the bud that months ago
Was ready, were the earth inclined, to blow;
The birds are happy in their chosen clime.

No doubt there are communings 'neath the snow,
And some bright eyes that never close in sleep,
And some quick ears that listen well and keep
Sweet hope alive in little hearts below.

Then let the winter wear itself away,
Borne thither on the breast of freighted rills;
A dream of spring has touched the constant hills,
And made the valleys patient of delay.

ITALIAN WINTER

N golden sandals glide the days,
Up morning beams, down sunset rays,
So soft and fleet one scarcely knows
That it is winter and the rose
Is blooming out of time and place.
The clouds move by with languid grace,
And gather into radiant lines
Above the far-off Apennines.
Across the seas serenely blue,
Low winds are wafted, falling to
A whisper ere the night is through.
And phantom ships glide o'er the bay
To phantom isles not far away,
Where fair Calypso and her train,
With feasts and music still detain
The hero of the Ægean main;
Historic warriors lead the dance
With stately heroines of romance,

And from the isles of Sirens float,
O'er Neptune's rough, discordant note,
Enchanting voices, rising, falling,
And to the dreamy spirit calling,
Chiming with restfulness and ease,
Attuned to tender memories.

In orange groves the gold is free,
Here nature knows no poverty ;
The earth, responsive to the calm,
Presents the olive branch and palm,
And fires of summer still burn low
Upon her broad, green hearth to show
How fresh the memory of their glow.
Indulgent Winter spares his frown,
Bestows his blessing, smiling down
From snowy heights, on breezy wing,
He joins the hearts of Fall and Spring.

WITH THE SEASONS

the Spring of the year, when the tides are flowing,
And the young buds swell in the soft'ning air—
If the butterfly's out, there are colors showing,
If the bee is abroad, there are sweets somewhere!

O the June of the year, with the gay bells ringing
From sky to sky where the blue line runs,
When Love goes over the green earth singing
And the meadow shines with its own gold suns.

O the Fall of the year, that rounds the measure,
And speeds the birds on a journey bold,

When the earth spreads out all her summer
treasure—
The spendthrift earth that should hoard her
gold.

O the Snow of the year, with the grim trees
lifting
Their tawny arms where the strong winds
sweep,
And the white, white billows are steadily
drifting
Over the earth that has gone to sleep.

IF LOVE WERE LIFE

IF love were life and hearts more tender were;
No growing old or dying would there be;
No eyes from too much weeping fail to see;
No more the brow be the interpreter
Of care beneath, nor soul a prisoner
Within a cell, but like a breath that's free,
Would spread itself through all eternity;
If love were life and hearts more tender were.

It is not hard to understand God's plan,
Nor be submissive when submission's sweet;
A flower simply lives to bloom, and man
Should simply live to Love, or else defeat
The Master's will, which he has made so clear,
That love enough would make us angels here.

AFTER THE PLAY

HAT is the stage when the players
are gone?—
Better the curtain were hastily
drawn.
Better the lights were turned low,
Better the people should go,
And that life should flow evenly on.

What can we read when the book has been
sealed?—
If to us once it has all been revealed,
And in it no longer we've part—
Let it be buried, dear Heart,
The earth will more tenderly shield.

MOONRISE

IKE the soft step of one for whom we wait,
Whose smile we feel before she is aware,—
Faint lines of light the moon's first greetings bear;
While she doth seem to linger at night's gate
As if to chide herself for being late;
Then bursts upon us with a conscious air,
And all the earth stands still to welcome there
Our Lady of the Skies in silver state!

LIFE

O see, to hear, to feel, to love, to pray,—
Aye, to have known all these, and then to die,
And to remember still the days gone by.
I wonder that the unused, unblest clay
Does not rise up in one bold mass and say:
"Breathe on this dust the breath of life, and I
A million, million years content will lie—
To feel the sunshine but for one brief day!
To hear of all the music one sweet strain!
To feel the thrill of being in me bound!
Then let the clouds and night come back again;—
I've seen the sunshine and I've heard the sound
Of music, and no death or grave's so deep
But I shall feel the sunshine in my sleep!"

TO LOVE

O love is to have touched a spring
That doth respond in everything;
And all the secrets are revealed
Of brook and bird and wood and field—
The brook that runs a merry race,
The bird that fills a lonely space
With song, the tender autumn wood
Soft swelling with a golden flood,
The field to which a deep content
The glory of the harvest lent—
As if my own glad heart to prove,
All sing of love, all sing of love.

To love is to know all that's pure
And good and fair, maybe endure
Some sorrow that makes love more sure;
Nor evil nor temptation see,
Nor weakness—save through sympathy;—

To be so glad for being here
It maketh all life's mystery clear ;—
And hearts were made, it seemeth plain,
For something more than suffer pain,—
For something sweeter than the rose,
Or anything that loves not, knows.

SLUMBER SONG

O, pretty lady-bird, this way to slumber land!
Here is a carrriage all lined with soft down;
Just close youreyes a bit, then by some fairy's wand
You will be wafted afar from the town—

Unto a country where only the dreamers go,
Where all the streets are just poppy-lined lanes;
There you will meet the strange folk little sleepers know—
Black bats and witches that walk with queer canes.

You are a princess and they must your bidding do,
Bowing and bending on wings and on knees—

When you're awake you might look the whole
city through
And find no one like them so anxious to
please.

There, little princess-girl, here is the turn
and the
Night is so short you must hasten away;
Tell what you've seen when at morn you
come back to me
And just see how funny 'twill all look by
day.

MY MOTHER

OME one I love comes back to me
With every gentle face I see ;—
Beneath each wave of soft gray hair
I see my own dear mother there ;
With every kindly glance and word
It seems as if I must have heard
Her speak, and felt her tender gaze
With all the love of olden days.
Then I am moved to take her hand,
And tell her now I understand
How tired she grew beneath the strain
Of feeling every loved one's pain ;
No further burdens could she bear,
The promise of that land more fair
Alone could tempt her from her child ;
And now if I could keep her here,
No sacrifice would be too dear,
No tempered winds for her too mild ;

Then I would smooth and kiss her face
And by her side take my old place
  And sob my years and cares away.
I think if I could feel her touch
Once more, it would not matter much
  How sunny or how dark the day;
The tears I have so long repressed
Would lose their ache upon her breast.

I love each mother that I see
That brings my own so near to me;
For though I never more may frame
Upon my lips that hallowed name
To any who will draw me near
  And answer me with warm caress,—
As long as there are mothers here,
  No child can be quite motherless.

THE SUSQUEHANNA

EMMED in by hills whose forests hold the dew;
Lake-born, and fed by many murmurous streams
That have the fairest fancies for their themes,
That tell the river how they rippled through
The rocky highlands where the mosses grew,—
How ferns and lichens, peeping through the seams
Of rocks, swayed soft as in mid-summer dreams,
And birds trilled every joyous air they knew.

The river knows the secrets of the hills,
And learns from happy fields as it goes by
The sweetness of contentment; and it fills
The little valley with another sky
Where birds fly back and forth—till evening wills
To set some stars there and the moonbeams shy.

I LOVE YOU

LOVE you—not because you love
me well,
Nor for the sweet words that your
lips may tell,
Nor for the love-light shining in your eyes,
Nor for the strength that in your manhood lies,
Not even for the heart that is so true—
I love you just because, dear, you are you!

IMMORTAL

URNS' "crimson-tippéd flower"
grows
With Tennyson's forget-me-nots,
As fair as long ago they rose
In their memorial spots.

The "violet by a mossy stone"
Blooms there, untended, every year;
In twilight skies still shines the one
Fair star to Wordsworth dear.

The "primrose by the river's brim"
Has seen its golden image oft;
And Shelley's skylark sings for him
As still it soars aloft.

"Full many a flower" has blushed unseen
Since Gray sang solemnly and low;
With wild thyme many a bank is green.
Though Shakespeare may not know.

No painter's hand the lily shows—
It needs no kinder touch than rain
To make it "blossom as the rose"
That grew on Sharon's plain.

Still sound the harp and twinkling feet
In Tara's many-storied rooms,
And for remembrance' sake the sweet
Rosemary always blooms.

Soft falls the noise of hidden brooks,
And still is faithful the "one moon,"
And every rose is shut and looks
"A bud again" in June.

IN THE HOME COUNTRY

OW I would see my girlhood haunts by night,
Although I miss the beauty of the hills,
The silver of the river, and the trills
Of birds among the trees and meadows bright.

Up the familiar street I go once more,
And in the starlight see no changes there;
The same old friends for whom I used to care
If I should knock would greet me at the door.

A shining welcome through each window streams;
No more a stranger in my own home land,
But one with them. Ah, now I understand,
I have just wakened from some strange, sad dreams.

And home again. How sweet it is! She knew
My footsteps from afar. A sudden fear
Now chills my heart lest she should not be here—
I dare not knock for fear those dreams are true.

STARS IN THE WELL

Y memory-clock I turn a little back;
The hands I'll move somewhere to morning-time;
A little maid, in dainty hood and sack,
Comes forth in answer to its silver chime.

She pauses in the doorway half a thought,
Then dances down the steps out toward the well;
A pause again—a wonder if she ought
To lift the lid from where the fairies dwell?

It is so dark and deep down there, it would
Be nice if they might run outside and play—
And she would be quite generous and good
And let the little fairies have their way;

And had not brother said that they were there?
And ought he not to know? Then she forgot
That mamma told her she must have a care,
And never go alone too near that spot.

But there the boards lay loose invitingly,
As if they really wanted to be raised;
And when they saw a friend had set them free,
Oh, would not then the fairies be amazed!

Her little hands the boards quick turn aside,
Her little face peers in to break the spell,
She sees no prisoned fairies forward glide,
She sees the *stars* a-shining in the well!

The well is dry; the little maid grown up;
The stars long since gone back into the sky;
The fairies come no more with her to sup,
The acorns on the ground unheeded lie;

But I am sure she wishes oft again
That she might all these later dreams dispel,
And look for fairies, and be glad as when
She saw the stars a-shining in the well.

PROMISES

SHUDDER at a promise I have made,
Which I know now I never can fulfill,
Because another promise haunts me still;
Though he to whom 'twas given has been laid
Where I but rarely visit, half afraid
That I might still be moved by his mute will.
Old promises are easy kept until
A living new one doth our hearts persuade.

Why, then, through all the glamor of the new,
Come back this wistful longing and regret?
Why, when so sweet this later love—the true,
The tried and lost are hardest to forget?
O God, forgive, my restless heart subdue!
Somewhere he lives and loves and waiteth yet.

A LOVE SONG

F you have seen the darkness
Unclose its lashes deep,
That heaven's blue eyes might open
Afresh from evening's sleep;
If you have seen at twilight
One single little star
Come softly through the azure
And shine for you afar,

Then you have seen the curtains
That shade my lady's eyes,
And keep the blue from losing
That look of glad surprise
Which came to them with loving;
And you can surely see
That she came down from heaven
And shines alone for me.

The flowers bloom around her,
  The birds come at her call,
Yet she's the sweetest blossom
  And singer of them all.
If I be worthy of her
  I know not, but I feel
Between me and all evil
  Her gentle spirit steal.

And I half fear some morning
  That I shall look for her,
And only find the dewdrops
  Where once her white feet were;
And one pale, perfect lily
  Where once was her sweet face,
And a white stone which sorrow
  Has set to mark the place.

THREE MINISTERING ANGELS

THREE ministering angels went
To a sad soul with sympathy;
One mortal fool, with good intent,
Undid the work of all the three.

BEAUTY

HE maketh for herself a paradise,
A paradise in which she dwells alone,
For every common thing is alien in
Her land. Her's is a wild, uncultured state,
But needs no hand to train it.
Stay the brook,—
It stops its song and dark and sullen grows.
Lower the forest and bare rocks come forth
And streamlets seek seclusion underground.
Break thee a flower, and it gives but one
Low, perfumed sigh, and dies. Cage thee a bird,
And canst thou then be sure thou hast the song?

The only law that beauty knows, obeys,
Is that of freedom for her own sweet will.
A cloud is seen upon her skies, and straight
The wind doth rise to scatter it afar.

The bough is bent, but beauty hastes to clothe
It with the lines of grace she knows so well.
She looks for favor, but in her own eyes;
Yet shapes herself to every season's mood;
For she is one with Winter, Summer, Spring,
And Autumn's smiles she doth most revel in.
Those of our own who are akin to her,
Are little children—sometimes those who still
Keep childish spirits under their white hair.

But all who would know beauty at her best
Should wait till even-fall, and look not down
Upon the flowers from which the color's flown,
But up where beauty takes at eve her flight,
Up where the silver, half-ringed moon glides on
Securely in her path amid the blue,
Up where the planets still reflect the day
We saw go down behind the western hills.

THE COUNTRY OF FARAWAY

THE beautiful country of Faraway!
O, sail I eastward or sail I west,
My good ship rides in no peaceful bay,
And anchors not by the Isle of Rest!

The beautiful country of Faraway!
Tell me, stranger, from whence you hail!—
Have you seen that land where my loved ones stay,
And can I reach it by foot or sail?

The beautiful country of Faraway!
O this the answer my question brings:
"Lower your sails and wait and pray,
That country is only reached with wings!"

VENICE

OFTLY falls the rhythmic beat
Of the water's unseen feet,
Pausing at each palace door,
Rocking little boats before,
Going out to meet the tide,
With the greetings of the Bride.

Song-wings at each casement beat;
Throbs the air with languorous heat;
Veronese and Titian tints
Where the sunlight dips and glints;
Idle drifts and moorings made
In the green, caressing shade.

Down blue lanes by arches spanned,
Slim, black floats their burdens land
At some roving Doge's door,
Then pass on with listless oar.
Suddenly a shining prow
Glides across another bow—

With a gay salute they meet,
Voyaging on the shimmering street!

From its footing in the walls
Up the eager ivy crawls
To some balcony or stair,
Hanging gardens in the air.
Where two grains of sand are met,
There some tender shrub has set
Up a temple green to song
That will not be vacant long.

In San Marco's sunny square
Pilgrim doves ask alms and care,
And the lion, crouched and dumb,
Looking toward Byzantium,
Scans the Adriatic's blue
For the ships long overdue.

Loath the sun his anchor weighs,
Sailing westward through the haze,
Leaving to the moon to touch,
With her silver brushes, such
Mystic outlines as she will,
Making beauty fairer still.

ON THE HEIGHTS

ACH heart has heights that few can ever reach,
Made solitary thus for love's sweet sake;
To reach the summit of her heart I take
My alpenstock of smiles and gentle speech.

I've crossed the vale where only friendships dwell.
(How good she is!) Above me, white and fair,
I see the edelweiss of trust bloom there,
And flowers of which no traveler may tell.

A sudden avalanche of joy sweeps past,
And I am not destroyed! Then may not I,
By long persistence mounting toward the sky,
Look from the heaven of her heart at last?

INFLUENCE

NOTE so low that none but Echo heard,
Was sung into the world one summer day;
The singer died,—the song went on its way
At first as faint as call of sleeping bird,
While Echo carried it in rhythmic word
From rock to rock, until it went astray
Into the outer space where Freedom lay,
And all the world then listened and was stirred.

And none could name or trace its humble birth,
Not even Echo, who had simply known
It as a broken note of little worth;—
So many voices now had swelled the tone,
It floated far beyond the bounds of earth
And blended with the songs around the Throne.

OF LOVE

IF you should miss some color rare,
Some light from out the sky,
My joyous soul could tell you where
These hidden treasures lie.

Love gathered all the brightness here
And placed it in my heart,
I only wonder how the year
Could spare so large a part.

So glad an I—no clouds I see,
Only the light beyond,
And know not if there darkness be
For hearts less blest and fond.

Ah, love! the tender magic word
Has set my heart in tune,
Content and happy as a bird
On her four eggs in June.

MORNING

FEEL that every dewdrop has a tone
And sings for ears more sensitive than mine,
While all the flowers their modest heads incline,
And list in fragrant reverence. Alone
And mute I stand before the Morning's throne.
The birds have speech, the breeze, the rhythmic pine,
Each brings its offering glad unto the shrine
Of the fair one, and only I bring none.

Yet, as I feel her breath upon my cheek,
And know there are sweet sounds I cannot hear,
And languages I know not how to speak,
Around me in the dreamy atmosphere,—
For what I've not I neither ask nor seek,
And what I have seems every morn more dear.

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ONLY THE FEW

HERE are many birds in the nests
in spring,
There are many buds that a promise
give,
There are many songs that the poets sing,
But only the few will live.

There are many children to laugh and play,
And many battles for youth to fight,
And many brave on through the heat of day,
But only the few till night.

There are many hearts in this world to beat,
And many eyes to see wondrous things,
And many ears to hear music sweet,
But only the few have wings.

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MY LITTLE LADY

KNOW a little lady,
So young and sweet and shy,
She blushes like the roses,
When a sunbeam dances by.

She trembles at a rude wind,
Is full of fancied fears;
It seems as if I'd happened
On a violet in tears.

But a smile her tears will banish,
And her skies be blue again,
For she knows no more of sorrow
Than a violet of pain.

She is so pure and gentle,
Could I reach the spring on high,
I would drink to her in starshine
From the dipper in the sky.

BELLS RING NEVER TWICE THE SAME

O not think that yonder bell,
Hung responsive in the tower,
Minds not whether funeral knell
Or a happy marriage hour
It shall next with peal proclaim—
Bells ring never twice the same.

Never twice the same bud blows,
Though the plant may blossom oft;
When the wind dies no one knows
If it sinks or soars aloft—
Or if yet the new breeze may
Be the breath of yesterday.

Yonder grow the apple trees,
One blooms pink and one blooms white;
There in May the honey-bees
Hum a chorus of delight;

But no bees one sees or hears
On the blossoms of past years.

Yet, when youth departs, we dream
  We can find it, and we go
Searching up and down the stream,
  By the paths we used to know,
Through the meadow, up the hill—
Our lost youth evades us still.

Breezes come to greet each day,
  Bells ring glad and mournful strains,
Apple trees bloom still in May—
  Only this sad fact remains;
Our lost youth, its flowers, its chimes,
Were the sweets of other times.

THE MOTHER-POET

Y mother was a poet!
And, though she left no song
To ripple down the centuries
And cheer the world along,

Her soul was full of music;
Her thought was set to rhyme
Of little feet, that kept her heart
A-singing all the time.

Her life was one long measure
Of kind, unselfish deeds;
(So common is the doing
One scarcely knows or heeds.)

She gave herself so freely,
Thought had she for us all,
And time to note each flower,
And the first bluebird's call.

A singer who sings truly
  Must often sing of pain,
Yet hope rose through her sorrow
  As rainbows through the rain.

O what a wondrous poem
  Is mother duty done!
My mother was a poet!—
  I'm sure that yours was one.

HUMAN NATURE

IF life were not so sad a thing,
Who, then, would think of being merry!
If God's will would bear altering,
His plans we should not try to vary!—
Were we once free from pain and care,
We straight would seek some cross to bear!

If upon love a seal were set,
How many seals would then be broken!
If gentle speech were hard to get,
How many kind words would be spoken!—
If Heaven were once denied us all,
How we should then to Heaven call!

MY LITTLE NEIGHBOR

Y little neighbor's table's set,
And slyly he comes down the tree,
His feet firm in each tiny fret
The bark has fashioned cunningly.

He pauses on a favorite knot;
Beneath the oak his feast is spread,
He asks no friend to share his lot,
Or dine with him on acorn bread.

He keeps his whiskers trim and neat,
His tail with care he brushes through;
He runs about on all four feet—
When dining he sits up on two.

He has the latest stripe in furs,
And wears them all the year around;
He does not mind the prick of burs
When there are chestnuts to be found.

I watch his home and guard his store,
A cozy hollow in a tree;
He often sits within his door
And chatters wondrous things to me.

ON THE MOUNTAIN

LL else lies far beneath me, or above,
And I, between two worlds, uncertain stand;
With eyes uplifted to a vision grand,
Yet without power to soar or upward move.
The steps to heaven are builded of our love,
And mine, alas, so timid on the land,
Could never find the way without His hand.
Naught have I in my heart by which to prove
My right to something I've not found below—
Except this constant, strong desire to rise;
It seems so strange the higher up we go—
The farther from earth's sinful, suffering cries,
That our unworthiness should haunt us so,
And wreck us at the gate of Paradise.

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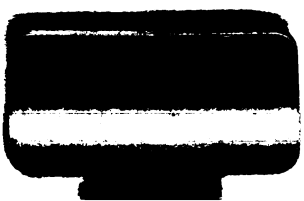
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